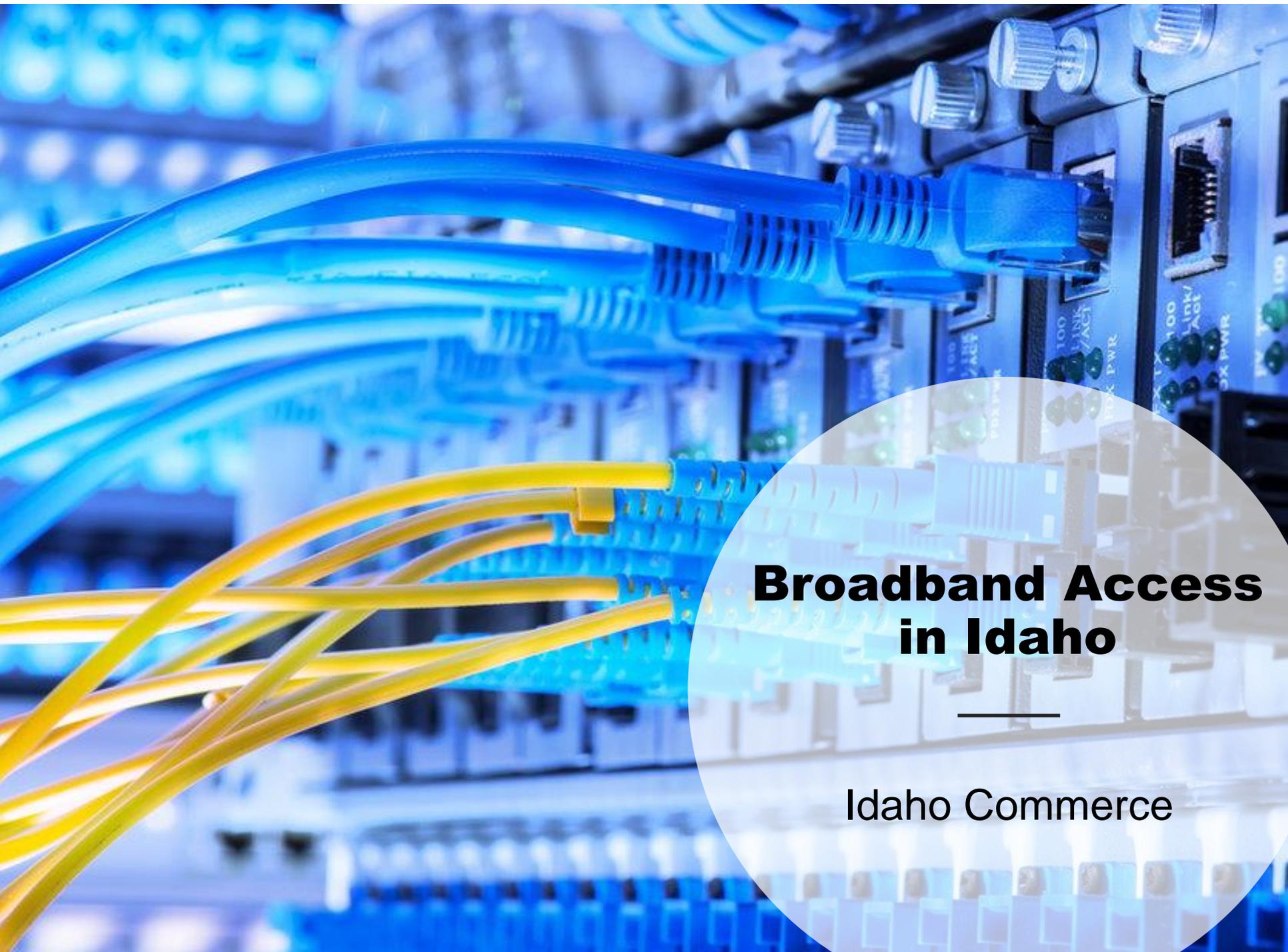


Attachment 1

Presentation before the Senate Transportation Committee on February 11, 2020 at 1:30 p.m. in WW53 of the Idaho State Capitol.

“Governor’s Task Force on Broadband:
Broadband Access in Idaho”

Presented by Tom Kealey, Director of the Idaho Department of Commerce



Broadband Access in Idaho

Idaho Commerce



For: Governor Brad Little

By: Idaho Broadband Task Force

Presented: October 31, 2019

Approved: November 22, 2019



BROADBAND ACCESS IS IMPERATIVE FOR IDAHO

RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE
IDAHO'S BROADBAND PLAN

BACKGROUND OF IDAHO BROADBAND PLAN

Like water, electricity and highways, Idaho citizens, communities and businesses, in both urban and rural areas, must have access to secure reliable, affordable broadband internet speeds in order to grow, thrive and connect to the world.

Whether you're a wheat farmer on the rolling Palouse hills, a hotelier at the foot the Tetons, or a student near the Sawtooths, reliable broadband access is essential to send and receive information vital to crop health, to take visitor reservations, process payments, and access the global network of information and learning tools to do your homework.

Access to the broadband and high-speed internet services is an urgent priority for Idahoans in all corners of the state. A robust, comprehensive and dynamic broadband plan for Idaho is imperative in order to identify priorities and secure funding. This report contains recommendations from the Governor's Broadband Task Force aimed at providing reliable broadband access to all residents and businesses in Idaho.



“To ensure Idaho can adapt to the rapidly evolving digital world, we must actively work to improve Idaho’s broadband access, pursuing all options to increase broadband connectivity.”

-Governor Brad Little
State of the State, January 2019

IDAHO BROADBAND TASK FORCE

Governor Brad Little proclaimed during the 2019 State of the State his priority and intention for an updated broadband plan to increase broadband connectivity for all Idaho communities.

In May 2019, Governor Little issued an executive order to form a task force to make recommendations to the Governor on policies and actions the state should consider to dramatically improve the state in connectivity and service levels.

Governor Little named the Director of the Idaho Department of Commerce, Tom Kealey, to chair the task force and develop a strong, expert team of varied backgrounds, regions and technologies to focus on a statewide approach to ensure all of Idaho is represented, evaluated and all solutions are analyzed.

Director Kealey appointed the task force, containing experts from a variety of industries ranging from hospitality to agriculture, ISPs, carriers and utilities, members of the Idaho Legislature, tribal organizations, and the public sector.

The task force met four times throughout the state to take full inventory of the status of broadband across Idaho. In addition, task force members held committee meetings throughout the process to examine specific topics and make recommendations.

RURAL A COMMITTEE

Greg Lowe, President & CEO, Syringa**
Danae Wilson, Dept. of IT, Nez Perce Tribe*
Sen. Carl Crabtree, Senator, Idaho Legislature
Curtis Fryer, CIO, Idaho Forest Group
Jim Blundell, Government Affairs, T-Mobile
Mike Fitzgerald, Commissioner, Shoshone County

RURAL B COMMITTEE

Mike Kennedy, President, Intermax**
Sen. David Nelson, Idaho Legislature*
Dana Basset, Global IT Services Delivery, Glanbia
Dan Greig, Gen. Manager, Farmers Mutual Tel.
Steve Ehle, Director Infastr, Simplot
Paul Desaulniers, Manager Reg. Ops, CenturyLink
Rep. Megan Blanksma, Idaho Legislature

URBAN COMMITTEE

Kevin England, Mayor, City of Chubbuck**
Michael Mattmiller, Gov. Affairs, Microsoft*
Rep. Mat Erpelding, Idaho Legislature
Doug Burnett, Res. Manager, Coeur d'Alene Resort
Jacob Larsen, CEO, Safelink Internet
Nancy Cyr, Engineering Lead, Idaho Power
Pat Felzien, Director, IT Engineering, Micron

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Cheryl Goettsche, General Manager, Sparklight
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Randy Gaines, CIO, ISU*
Kenneth Smith, Technologist, HP
Robert Hampton, CIO, Jackson's

MAPPING COMMITTEE

Guy Cherp, Vice President, Cox Comm.**
Brad Richey, Director, Office of Emergency Mgt.*
Jeff Weak, Administrator, ITS- Office of Gov.
Jaynie Bentz, Asst. Port Manager, Port of Lewiston
Kari Saccomanno, City Manager, Ting

Tom Kealey, Director, Idaho Commerce***

*** Task Force Chair

** Committee Chair

* Committee Co-Chair

IDAHO BROADBAND PLAN GOALS



Link Rural Idaho to a Global Marketplace

Broadband access is essential to modern industry, including agriculture, food production, farming and ranching.



Give Students and Families the Tools to Succeed

Broadband access is critical for students, parents, and educators to facilitate communication, reach vast sources of research and information, and utilize the most advanced learning tools.



Help All Communities Increase Speeds

Many areas of Idaho, particularly the most rural locations, still lack reliable broadband-level speeds at an affordable price.



Connect Health Care and First Responders

Broadband is an important tool for health care providers to access electronic health records, utilized telemedicine advancements and exchange urgent information.



Identify Funding and Partnership Models

State efforts to fund infrastructure and encourage investment to improve broadband access can take a variety of forms.



Convene Partners

Improving broadband planning requires partnership from a variety of stakeholders including ISPs, carriers, entrepreneurs, utilities, and the public sector, including state agencies.

APPROACH TO ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Governor Objectives

- Affirm State Broadband Plan for Idaho ensures both urban and rural Idaho are well connected and well positioned to attract business and create maximum success for our communities.
- Develop adequate mapping of broadband and high-speed internet infrastructure to progress connectivity throughout the state.
- Analyze existing resource gaps to help advance the state in connectivity, speeds and capacity.

Task Force Formed

At the State of the State, January 2019, Governor Little announced improving broadband access would be a key economic development initiative in his administration. In May of 2019, a task force of diverse statewide technology experts ranging from ISPs, carriers, utilities, business leaders, tribal organizations, stakeholder associations and state, county and municipal government agencies was formed to fulfill the Governor's directive to focus on a statewide approach, ensuring all of Idaho is properly represented and all options evaluated and analyzed.

Meetings Held

- Initial meetings focused on introducing task force members, establishing goals and desired outcomes, reviewing of technology capabilities and options, funding mechanisms and solutions currently in place.
- Between the second and third meetings, the task force broke into committees to focus on specific issues of communities across Idaho.
- The final two meetings focused on preliminary recommendations from committees, distilling and refining recommendations and crafting final recommendations in preparation to report to the Governor.

Committee Assessments

Seven committees were established to evaluate different market segments, users, technologies, and topics:

- Rural (A), Rural (B), Urban, INL/Universities, Mapping, State Broadband Office, Final Report.
- Each committee was tasked to develop ideas and recommendations to put forth to the task force.
- The Final Report committee was tasked with distilling the committee recommendations into final recommendations for improving Idaho's Broadband Plan.

Broadband Plan

- Addressing solutions for the unserved areas in rural Idaho is the highest priority.
- Importance of maintaining local authority and technology agnostic recommendations.
- Funding remains uncertain; accurate mapping and data remains a challenge.
- Strong support for a state broadband office.
- Affirm Governor support for Broadband Plan and notify federal partners to maximize Idaho funding.
- Urban areas, universities and INL are currently well served but will need to consistently improve.

IDAHO BROADBAND LANDSCAPE

The task force found that it is important to recognize that different market segments require different solutions. Larger and many smaller markets are presently well-served due to significant investments in technology and infrastructure. Solutions that limit regulation, increase efficiency, enable healthy competition and consider new technology options will help speed and service in most areas grow and improve.

Rural communities and remote locales face a different set of challenges. Geography, terrain, and lack of population density require different technology solutions, investment levels, and greater public-private collaboration. Better state coordination and federal scoring for Idaho rural projects may incent providers and entrepreneurs to deploy innovative technology solutions at attractive ROI's for the private sector. Federal funding programs are available to public entities to enable greater efficiencies for rural solutions.

MARKET SEGMENTS	TECHNOLOGIES AND EQUIPMENT	INVESTMENTS
Major Markets	Fiber; Cable; DSL; Cellular; Microwave	Significant investment; Large private sector funding; Government contracts
Smaller Markets	Fiber; Cable; DSL; Cellular; Fixed-Wireless Towers	Cell towers require smaller investment; Portable towers emerging as new technology option
Rural Communities	Middle Mile to Central Town; Satellite; Fixed-wireless; CBRS; New, lower-cost technologies	Investment by public and private entities; Entrepreneurs funding new technology and service options
Remote Locales	Satellite; Line of Sight; Fixed-wireless; CBRS; New technologies	Investment is challenging, singular projects can be costly; Low ROI; Aerial infrastructure is half the cost of digging

RECOMMENDATIONS AND OUTCOMES

The task force agrees with the Governor that broadband and high-speed internet should be a strategic and economic priority for Idaho. Most importantly, developing solutions to better serve and assist rural Idaho should be the highest priority and thus the focus of most recommendations.

Recommended solutions should remain “technology neutral.” Due to the continuous technological advances in delivery of broadband services and Idaho’s geography challenges and communities’ unique circumstances, all technology options should be considered as solutions to improve connectivity across the state.

Idaho’s urban areas are well served given customer density, access to capital, and existing infrastructure. Idaho’s universities and the Idaho National Laboratory have adequate broadband but should maintain their leading edge with existing resources and could serve as a catalyst for improvements to broadband technologies.

With continued healthy competition among providers, reduced regulation, more awareness of options, and the benefit of policy recommendations noted below, Idaho’s broadband connectivity should improve and thrive.

Call For Action #1: Update Broadband Plan

Affirmation of the Idaho Broadband Plan by the Governor, along with the appropriate notifications to Federal and State agencies will support maximum funding opportunities and coordination to expand broadband service across Idaho. Letters of affirmation allow for maximum scoring for internet service providers and therefore higher probability of securing millions of dollars for reaching unserved communities. When combining the potential for more federal funding and state agency coordination efforts, the investment for ISP’s may be reduced such that their minimum ROI’s may be achieved to consider a successful public-private investment partnership.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND OUTCOMES

Call For Action #2: Establish a State Broadband Office

As part of its broadband plan, Idaho should create a State Broadband Office within the Department of Commerce, initially recommending one full time staff position. Idaho is not unique in the need for broadband. By establishing a State Broadband Office, Idaho will be better positioned to coordinate efforts across Idaho and to avoid costly errors by learning from what other states have successfully accomplished.

The State Broadband Office could be a resource for a state broadband strategy including consumer education, facilitating opportunities and funding sources, and coordinate where Idaho can leverage existing infrastructure, such as roadways and utility assets, to reach unserved communities in the state.

The task force evaluated many different data sources and mapping options to understand what best illustrates Idaho's available services, speed and infrastructure. The task force identified where gaps exist, and recommends the Idaho Broadband Office should be the repository for all publicly available maps and data sources to create a clear understanding of Idaho's opportunity. As new maps and data sources become publicly available, the State Broadband Office should include this information to enhance Idaho's broadband availability.

Idaho must resolve the gap in funding that is creating a barrier, for needed broadband deployment. The State Broadband Office could assist the state and communities throughout Idaho by leveraging federal funding sources including, but not limited to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Federal Communications Commission and U.S. Department of Commerce programs. The State Broadband Office would also leverage State assets.

While awaiting the establishment of a State Broadband Office, members of the task force should continue to meet periodically and work together with the Department of Commerce as an "interim" state broadband office on the identified projects within Idaho.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND OUTCOMES

Call For Action #3: Consider State Funding Options

Beyond the available federal programs, funding will continue to be a challenge. Moreover, the State could make a large contribution toward lowering project investment with the coordination of a “dig once” policy and a proactive coordination of potential large installation. The investment could be substantially smaller if several projects were completed with “one dig” or “one hang.” State funding solutions through grants and loans that complement existing programs and projects and reforming the existing State Universal Service Fund to include broadband subscribers should be considered to close the funding gap and deploy broadband infrastructure and service.

Call For Action #4: Improve Deployment Efficiency by Formalizing Dig Once and Hang Once Policies

Establish a state construction registry maintained by the State of Idaho for all upcoming transportation infrastructure projects and of existing available conduit in the public right of way and promote joint projects. Idaho’s most precious asset regarding broadband deployment is its Right of Way along its highways. A significant cost of broadband deployment is in the construction costs for installation in the Right of Way.

With uncertain funding, better communication between agencies and utilities when ground is broken in a public right of way is smart policy to immediately improve deployment efficiency. Broadband deployment incurs many costs and can be a burden to our state if not coordinated properly from the outset of a project.

Proactive and simultaneous broadband infrastructure planning with utility maintenance/expansion, Idaho Department of Transportation, County Highway District highway projects, or municipal road maintenance projects could dramatically change and improve the way our ISP’s view broadband preparation and development.

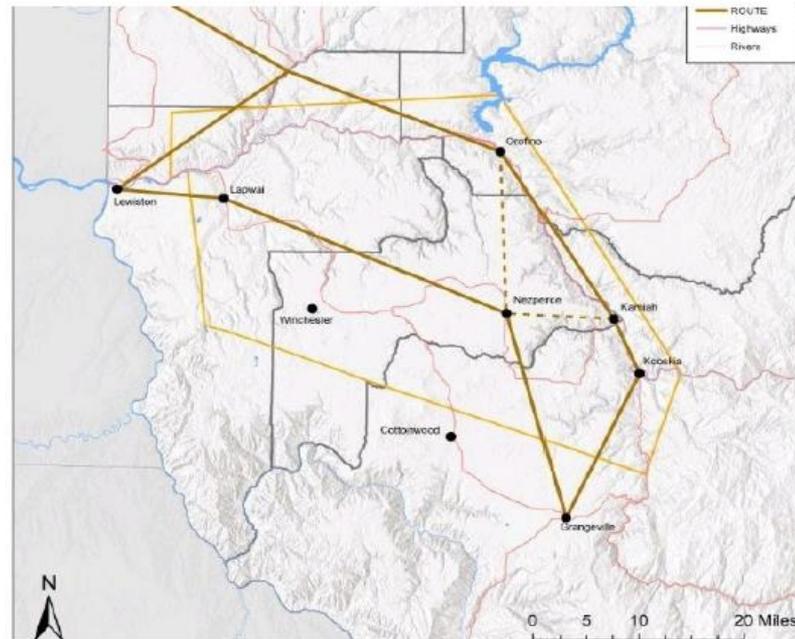
Encourage local communities to work with all applicable public entities and private partners to determine the most effective solutions for deploying broadband. All approaches and policies should support the efficient construction of cost-competitive, reliable broadband services while remaining technology neutral in its delivery.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND OUTCOMES

Call For Action #5: Engage on Near Term Projects

The task force recognized that there are current, unfunded projects in unserved areas which are very important for Idaho. These near term projects could have an immediate impact on unserved areas:

- North Central Idaho “open access” fiber network across five counties for the unserved region based on the District 2 Interoperability Governance Board (DIGB2) consulting study.*
- North-South pathway between Grangeville and Riggins
- I-90 corridor between Cataldo, Idaho and Montana border
- Melba



* DIGB2 consulting study map

TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Call For Action #1: Update State Broadband Plan

Call For Action #2: Establish a State Broadband Office

Call For Action #3: Consider State Funding Options

Call For Action #4: Formalize Dig Once and Hang Once Policies

Call For Action #5: Engage on Near Term Projects



BROADBAND OFFICE - EXAMPLE

TOPLINE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Create the Idaho Broadband Office within the Idaho Department of Commerce, staffed by one full-time employee.

RECOMMENDED BROADBAND OFFICE RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Make recommendations to the governor and Legislature regarding policies and initiatives that promote the development of broadband-related infrastructure in the state
2. Promote private sector, public sector and cooperative broadband solutions including engaging with stakeholders representing a wide variety of interests, including but not limited to local, state, federal and tribal government officials, business and other community leaders, to facilitate communications deployment and collaboration
3. Encourage expedited policies for communications infrastructure construction, right of way and permitting that establishes clear and timely processes, reasonable and consistent fees and assistance for providers in deploying communications infrastructure
4. Support local and regional broadband planning including both intra-state and inter-state projects
5. Provide publicly accessible resources on communications technologies available within the state
6. To serve as the State's subject matter expert on communications technologies
7. Generate public awareness and educational materials of the value of broadband technologies and applications
8. Research community broadband adoption barriers, including identifying communities where broadband adoption is undesirable
9. Serve as state repository for broadband mapping information
10. Support and coordinate efforts of the Idaho Broadband Taskforce or other successive committees as may be established
11. Produce an annual report and present findings to the legislature, governor and stakeholders about the state of broadband in Idaho and the annual accomplishments of the Broadband Office to meet its responsibilities

NEXT STEPS

- Idaho Commerce to continue to lead the Idaho Broadband Plan ongoing effort with an interim broadband office to work on identified near term projects.
 - Engage Idaho legislators.
 - Establish smaller, regional working groups.
 - Focus on “high scoring” for federal grants and loans.
 - Focus on a comprehensive “beta” project in underserved North Central Idaho.

APPENDIXES & SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

To view the full report including all appendixes and supporting documents, please go to the following link:
<http://commerce.idaho.gov/broadbandplan2019>



NEXT STEPS

ITD Partnership

Direct ISP Engagement

Regional Working Groups

Federal Funding Opportunities

Local Autonomy

Idaho's Rural Telcos

Promoting Broadband – legislature, cities,
counties, associations

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